

# *IN MEDIO*

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## **Public Debates, the Extent of God's Knowledge, and Human Will**

(Revised: October 17, 2009)

On September 27, 2006, I was a guest on The Narrow Mind show with Pastor Gene Cook. The audio of this can be listened to under the Elihu Books Topical Index, under several listings which are provided in the revision note for October 17, 2009, at the end of this article. To my knowledge, the audio to this debate is nowhere, any longer made available by either Pastor Gene Cook or by Dr. Robert Morey.

I was first approached about appearing on the show by Jeff Downs of RCTR.org on Monday, September 11, 2006. By Wednesday, September 13, 2006, Mr. Downs and I had worked out the arrangement whereby I would be available for up to two hours with Pastor Cook to discuss issues relating to the identity of Jesus.

Since the show has aired some questions have come up about the program, its contents, its participants, and the program itself has created several unexpected opportunities. Therefore, it is my intent in this article to keep speculation about these matters from running amuck and to set the stage for what is next.

Regarding the show itself, all was as I have described above until the morning of the show when at 7:05 AM I opened my email account and noticed an email from Mr. Downs. He sent it to me at 5:19 PM the prior evening. In that email he advised me that he found out that Dr. Robert Morey would be co-hosting the show with Pastor Cook. Dr. Morey is a Trinitarian with whom I have been seeking a debate for some time. In fact, as recently as February of this year I exchanged several emails with Dr. Morey that were promising, but ultimately Dr. Morey was unable to commit to a debate. These emails were exchanged through a mutual associate of ours, and eventually they became public.

Naturally, therefore, I was a bit surprised that Dr. Morey had chosen to reveal himself as a co-host on The Narrow Mind show, in the light of our previous (though recent) exchange. In any event, Mr. Downs wanted to make sure that I knew about Morey's involvement and I sent him an email the morning of the show advising him that it was not a problem at all. In fact, I was hopeful that this might lead to the debate that previously had not materialized. Indeed, it has (see below).

Before I get into the details of The Narrow Mind discussion with Morey and the debates that are to follow, I feel it is important to discuss the benefit of debates, how they can help others, and why Christians, especially Jehovah's Witnesses, should engage in them more frequently, now.

### **The Kind of Debating which can Honor Jah**

Christians look to Jesus Christ as their Lord, even their God (John 20:28), being as he is "the expression of [God's] glory and the imprint of his being" (Hebrews 1:3). The Bible does not distinguish between him and the Father in terms of "person" as is defined in post-Apostolic periods. But when you look at Jesus you are looking at Jehovah, the Father (John 8:54; 14:9). Jesus is an individual being; he has a will of his own. Jesus does not act according to his own will but, as he stated, according to "the will of him that sent me" (John 5:30).

Therefore, when we consider the way Jesus spoke out against others we are in effect looking at the way the Father, the one God whom Jesus expresses, "is doing his works" (John 14:10; 1 Corinthians 8:4-6). What, then, does Jesus show us about how we should act toward those whom we believe are falsely claiming to represent him and his Father in their conduct and in their teachings?

Jesus honored his God and Father (John 20:17) with a 'zeal for God's house that ate him up' inside (John 2:17). He threw those who were making his Father's house a "house of merchandise" (John 2:16) out of the temple; he regularly "answered" those who questioned him, even answering those who insulted him by calling him "a Samaritan" with a demon (John 7:16; 8:48-49); he responded to those who 'put him to the test' (Mark 8:11; 10:2); and he even addressed those who "took counsel together in order to trap him in his speech" (Matthew 22:15).

A clue as to why Jesus went to these extents to speak out against false teachers and hypocrites when he could simply have avoided them altogether and 'declared the kingdom of God' as it was 'for this he was sent forth' (Luke 4:43), can be seen in the following two accounts:

#### **Matthew 9:35-38 (NWT)**

And Jesus set out on a tour of all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and preaching the good news of the kingdom and curing every sort of disease and every sort of infirmity. On seeing the crowds he felt pity for them, because they were skinned and thrown about like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples: "Yes, the harvest is great, but the workers are few. Therefore, beg the Master of the harvest to send out workers into his harvest."

**John 11:41–42 (NWT)**

Now Jesus raised his eyes heavenward and said: “Father, I thank you that you have heard me. True, I knew that you always hear me; but on account of the crowd standing around I spoke, in order that they might believe that you sent me forth.”

What I am pointing to in these two accounts is that Jesus acted or spoke at times because of the way some were being treated and to build up the faith of those who needed it. When he visited “the cities and villages” and even taught in the synagogues he recognized that those who should have been providing comfort and understanding were instead ‘binding up heavy loads and putting them upon the shoulders of men, but they themselves are not willing to budge them with their finger’ (Matthew 23:4).

Instead of representing Jehovah’s love and care they were selfish, looking for “the most prominent place at evening meals and the front seats in the synagogues, and the greetings in the marketplaces and to be called Rabbi by men” (Matthew 23:6–7). Also, Jesus could have simply prayed silently to God for the resurrection of Lazarus, but instead he spoke openly “on account of the crowd standing around...in order that they might believe.”

Further, after Jesus died and was resurrected he empowered others to speak in his name. One of those so empowered was the apostle Paul. Paul himself recognized the value of teaching “publicly [Greek: *demosia*] and from house to house” (Acts 20:20). *Demosios* refers to that which is made known “in the open” or among “the general public” (BDAG, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, page 223), and it is contrasted with what was done “from house to house,” likely referring to what was done privately in the homes of the early Christians. While Jehovah’s Witnesses legitimately combine these two actions in their public ministry, Paul separated them.

In any event, Paul clearly taught openly, in the general public, “in the temple,” and “from house to house.” He even regularly entered into the synagogues of the Jews:

**Acts 17:1–4 (NWT)**

They now journeyed through Am·phip´o·lis and Ap·ol·lo´ni·a and came to Thes·sa·lo·ni´ca, where there was a synagogue of the Jews. So according to Paul’s custom he went inside to them, and for three sabbaths he reasoned with them from the Scriptures, explaining and proving by references that it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead, and [saying]: “This is the Christ, this Jesus whom I am publishing to YOU.” As a result some of them became believers and associated themselves with Paul and Silas, and a great multitude of the Greeks who worshiped [God] and not a few of the principal women did so.

Indeed, after Paul’s speech in an Antioch synagogue “many of the Jews and of the proselytes who worshiped [God] followed Paul and Barnabas” (Acts 13:43). Of course,

this did not keep the Jews from “getting jealous” and “blasphemously contradicting Paul and the early Christians (Acts 13:45; 17:5).

But a further result of the Christians' speech in the synagogue was that on the “next Sabbath nearly all the city gathered together” to hear them (Acts 13:44). This brought forth both rejoicing (Acts 13:48) and persecution (Acts 13:50). Thus, it appears to be an appropriate model that should be followed today by those who claim to be witnesses of Jehovah, followers of Jesus Christ, and brothers in faith of the early Christians.

Indeed, still another example of the early Christians' public defense of the truth about Jesus involved a Jewish Christian named Apollos:

#### **Acts 18:24–28 (NWT)**

Now a certain Jew named A·pol·los, a native of Alexandria, an eloquent man, arrived in Eph'e·sus; and he was well versed in the Scriptures. This [man] had been orally instructed in the way of Jehovah and, as he was aglow with the spirit, he went speaking and teaching with correctness the things about Jesus, but being acquainted with only the baptism of John. And this [man] started to speak boldly in the synagogue. When Pris·cil'la and Aq'ui·la heard him, they took him into their company and expounded the way of God more correctly to him. Further, because he was desiring to go across into A·cha'ia, the brothers wrote the disciples, exhorting them to receive him kindly. So when he got there, he greatly helped those who had believed on account of [God's] undeserved kindness; for with intensity he thoroughly proved the Jews to be wrong publicly, while he demonstrated by the Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ.

Apollos was “well versed in the Scriptures” and when Priscila and Aquila heard him “speaking and teaching with correctness” in the synagogue they did not restrain him. Instead they “expounded the way of God more correctly to him” and the brothers in Ephesus told those in Achaia to “receive him kindly” knowing that he was going to ‘prove the Jews to be wrong publicly [Greek: *demosia*].’

True, there are occasions when it is a waste of time to endlessly debate issues that only “furnish questions for research rather than a dispensing of anything by God in connection with faith” (1 Timothy 1:4). Paul noted “false stories” or “myths” (Greek: *mythois*) and “genealogies” among just such things (verse 4; compare Titus 1:14). But that did not mean that genealogies, for example, were unimportant. They clearly were (Matthew 1:1–17; Luke 3:23–38).

“Foolish questionings” and “fights over the Law” were also singled out by Paul as things to avoid (Titus 3:9). These involved matters that were not necessary in order to make “firm assertions” so as to ‘maintain fine works’ (Titus 3:8). Paul also warns against “questionings and debates about words” (1 Timothy 6:4). But here he is talking about

those who ‘teach other doctrine and who do not assent to healthful words’ (1 Timothy 6:3).

That is precisely how many who oppose the truth about God today conduct themselves, and it leads to the very condition of which Paul speaks. Christians, on the other hand, should use our “power of reason” (Romans 12:1), not to “fight about words” for fear it may “overturn those listening” (2 Timothy 2:14), but to be “always [Greek: *aei*] ready to make a defense [Greek: *apologian*] before everyone [Greek: *panti*] that demands of you a reason for the hope in you, but doing so with a mild temper and deep respect” (1 Peter 3:15).

Paul knew the danger that deception and empty talk could pose to unsuspecting people, and he was clear as to what should be done about it:

**Titus 1:10–11 (NWT)**

For there are many unruly men, profitless talkers, and deceivers of the mind, especially those men who adhere to the circumcision. It is necessary to shut the mouths of these, as these very men keep on subverting entire households by teaching things they ought not for the sake of dishonest gain.

To “shut the mouths” of deceivers today Christians must “reprove those who contradict” (Titus 1:9). To make “firm assertions” today Jehovah’s Witnesses must ‘overturn reasonings and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God’ (2 Corinthians 10:5). For even the knowledge of God himself has come under attack. Defending Jehovah God in this way honors him, and it is the duty of his witnesses to do so where possible.

## **Jehovah’s Witnesses and the Knowledge of God**

Dr. Morey claims that God “knows all the details of the future” (Dr. Robert Morey, The Narrow Mind radio show, September 27, 2006). I agree with most of what the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society has published on the subject of God’s foreknowledge, including the following from volume one of the Society’s Bible dictionary, *Insight on the Scriptures* (Brooklyn: Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, 1988), pages 852, 853:

**Foreknowledge, Foreordination**

***Does God know in advance everything that people will do?***

The question then arises: Is his exercise of foreknowledge infinite, without limit? Does he foresee and foreknow all future actions of all his creatures, spirit and human? And does he foreordain such actions or even predestinate what shall be

the final destiny of all his creatures, even doing so before they have come into existence?

Or, is God's exercise of foreknowledge selective and discretionary, so that whatever he chooses to foresee and foreknow, he does, but what he does not choose to foresee or foreknow, he does not? And, instead of preceding their existence, does God's determination of his creatures' eternal destiny await his judgment of their course of life and of their proved attitude under test? ...

In contrast with the theory of predestinarianism, a number of texts point to an examination by God of a situation then current and a decision made on the basis of such examination.

Thus, at Genesis 11:5–8 God is described as directing his attention earthward, surveying the situation at Babel, and, at that time, determining the action to be taken to break up the unrighteous project there. After wickedness developed at Sodom and Gomorrah, Jehovah advised Abraham of his decision to investigate (by means of his angels) to “see whether they act altogether according to the outcry over it that has come to me, and, if not, *I can get to know it.*” (Ge 18:20–22; 19:1) God spoke of ‘becoming acquainted with Abraham,’ and after Abraham went to the point of attempting to sacrifice Isaac, Jehovah said, “For *now I do know* that you are God-fearing in that you have not withheld your son, your only one, from me.”—Ge 18:19; 22:11, 12; compare Ne 9:7, 8; Ga 4:9.

Selective foreknowledge means that God could choose *not* to foreknow indiscriminately all the future acts of his creatures.

I agree that the cited scriptures show that there are events that take place which God chooses to find out about, instead of already knowing them because his nature demands that he know all things present and future. It is not a denial of God's nature to say that he learns from certain events that unfold before him, if that is in fact his nature.

Texts such as Genesis 22:12 show that Jehovah watches the actions of his human creatures to see what they will do in matters not foretold or foreseen beforehand. This account was brought up during The Narrow Mind show to Dr. Morey and his response was to say, “that was for Abraham.” The text itself says that it was for Jehovah, through his angel, to find out what Abraham would do, not for Abraham. Thus, Morey stood and still stands contradicted by the text itself.

However, I do not agree completely with the following statement made in the same article from the *Insight* book, pages 853–854:

God's arranging for a test by means of “the tree of the knowledge of good and bad” and his creation of “the tree of life” in the garden of Eden also would not be meaningless or cynical acts, made so by his foreknowing that the human pair would sin and never be able to eat of “the tree of life.”—Ge 1:28; 2:7–9, 15–17; 3:22–24.

I do not believe that if God were to foresee all things future that their occurring would make them “meaningless” simply because he knew all that would happen. It is possible, in my view, that Jehovah did look beforehand at all that would occur as a result of creating spirit and human beings, but created them anyway in spite of what some would choose to do for the sake of what others would choose to do.

In other words, I believe Jehovah God could have weighed the matter according to his standards and determined that if a consequence of having other rational beings in his image able to enjoy life with him forever was that other rational beings would choose not to serve him and even disobey his laws and cause pain to others, then in the end the joy of some would be worth the pain of others since they were all given the opportunity to decide for themselves.

Jehovah could have created all things with this knowledge because that is simply what was going to occur as a result of the decisions of some of his creatures. Knowing that he could allow for all such beings to decide whom to serve and still ‘make the way out’ (1 Corinthians 10:13) for those who love him is not “meaningless.” But I believe more so that Jehovah exercises selective foreknowledge and does in fact involve himself in the affairs of man and spirits to ultimately accomplish his will, while not requiring that anyone “be tempted beyond what they can bear” (1 Corinthians 10:13).

As I see it, simply knowing what others will do as a consequence of being given a will and a desire of our own does not make the one who knows what others will do responsible for what is done. Jehovah is only responsible for the things that are done to the extent that he involves himself in the affairs of others, influencing the outcome according to his will. This, I believe, he often does.

Morey misrepresented my position and the Bible several times during our discussion. He repeatedly told me that “God cannot deny his own nature” (as if that was my belief); he also chided me by saying, “You may not like the term ‘limited,’” as if I were teaching a “limited” God when, in fact, I claim that that is what Morey is teaching by suggesting that God does not have control over what he knows. But I contend this is a consequence of Morey’s teaching, not that he actually believes his god is “limited.” He seemed to be claiming that I believe that God is “limited” and that that is okay with me even while at the same time contradicting what is elsewhere said in the Bible of God’s nature.

Tell me, is God “limited” if he does not, or even cannot know what something looks like before it even exists? I do not think so. I do not believe, for example, that just because God did not know what physical light looked like before he created it that this means God is “limited,” because a “limit” implies that there is more that could be known and that while *more* can be known God *cannot* know it. I contend that God could not rightly know what something truly looked like before he created it. Thus, it is not a “limit” for him *not* to know what *cannot* be known:

**Genesis 1:3–5 (NWT)**

And God proceeded to say: "Let light come to be." Then there came to be light. After that God saw that the light was good, and God brought about a division between the light and the darkness. And God began calling the light Day, but the darkness he called Night.

Unless Morey is going to claim that the physical "light" created here existed before it was created (and was thus, eternal) God did not 'see the light' until he actually created it. He may have looked ahead to what it *would look like*, but until it actually existed God, according to this account, did not actually "see" it.

Of course, once Jehovah created physical light or if he decided to look ahead to its creation he then knew what it looked like. These are defensible, biblical positions that reveal God's nature and that do not contradict it as it is described elsewhere from Genesis to Revelation.

Dr. Morey also asked me during the show, "God learns?" My answer was, "yes," and another text that I used to support my position was Genesis 2:19, where we are told:

**Genesis 2:19 (NWT)**

Now Jehovah God was forming from the ground every wild beast of the field and every flying creature of the heavens, and he began bringing them to the man to see what he would call each one; and whatever the man would call it, each living soul, that was its name.

As I told Morey, while God could have looked into Adam's figurative heart and mind and discerned what vocabulary he would utter upon seeing certain creatures, this text does not say that he did so. It says God "began bringing [the animals] to the man to see what he would call each one." God learns in this way, and there is nothing in such learning that contradicts his nature. It is God's nature to learn in this way.

Morey, of course, accused me of 'entrenching' myself in a 'primitive text' like Genesis 2:19 when in fact I used this and other texts and followed and explained each text he tried to use in support of his position or in contradiction to my own. I simply was not going to, nor will I during our future debates, abandon a text that he cannot harmonize with his views.

Another point from my discussion with Morey that I will mention here is Morey's claim that 'God would have to know the things he does not know in order to know that he chooses not to know them.' Who, Dr. Morey, ever said that God knows the things he chooses not to know? I never said so, and that is precisely what I would say is not true: God does *not know* the things he chooses not to know. It is Morey who is making this claim, a claim that I reject and that is contradicted by Scripture.

For example, God has created man and woman. God knows that he has created them to move and exist, to act in the world. But if as in Genesis 2:19 God chooses not to foreknow, specifically, some of the acts he knows by his design of mankind they will perform, even as they are living, then his knowing that they will ultimately perform an act (that Adam will name the animals once they are brought to him) does not mean he knows what man will call them!

God knew Adam would call them something when they were brought to him, because that is how he made Adam. But until the event actually occurred Jah chose not to know the outcome, though he knew it would ultimately take place: Adam would name the animals but Jehovah did not know what Adam would name them until they were actually named.

God certainly does foreknow the future and even shapes it according to his will. The example of Jacob and Esau discussed during The Narrow Mind show in Romans 9:9–13 proves this. God saw beforehand whom he would love and whom he would hate, and he changed the normal course of events so that the one he loved would be served by the one he “hated.” Jehovah will take action to make sure that his purpose is fulfilled. His will cannot be changed or stopped. But we can disappoint God, and even turn against him, because we have free will.

## The Will of Man and the Decrees of God

Jehovah’s Witnesses have spoken truthfully about Jehovah’s knowledge. But more can be said to define and defend what they have taught. The “Reformers” and those who have followed in their footsteps have not spoken truthfully about God’s knowledge. More must be said to undo the damage that they have done. They have also not spoken truthfully about man and his standing before God.

In presenting the “Reformed” view of predestination, specifically Calvinism, Philip Schaff writes:

Predestination, according to Calvin, is the eternal and unchangeable decree of God by which he foreordained, for his own glory and the display of his attributes of mercy and justice, a part of the human race, without any merit of their own, to eternal salvation, and another part, in just punishment of their sin, to eternal damnation. “Predestination,” he [John Calvin] says, “we call the eternal decree of God, by which he has determined in himself the destiny of every man. For they are not all created in the same condition, but eternal life is foreordained for some, and eternal damnation for others. Every man, therefore, being created for one or the other of these ends, we say, he is predestined either to life or to death.” [Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, vol. 8 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995 [1910]), pages 549–550.]

I reject this teaching entirely. I do not believe the Bible teaches that Jehovah God has by "eternal decree" predestined the salvation and condemnation of "every man." During the upcoming debate with Dr. Morey I will support my position as stated to him during The Narrow Mind that while man is a slave to sin because of the choices of Adam and Eve we still have a will that allows us to "flee from the desires incidental to youth," as did Joseph when he was pursued by Potiphar's wife:

**Genesis 39:7–9 (NWT)**

Now after these things it came about that the wife of his master began to raise her eyes toward Joseph and say: "Lie down with me." But he would refuse and would say to his master's wife: "Here my master does not know what is with me in the house, and everything he has he has given into my hand. There is no one greater in this house than I am, and he has not withheld from me anything at all except you, because you are his wife. So how could I commit this great badness and actually sin against God?"

Joseph's being a slave to sin did not force him to sin, here. He had free will and in this instance he exercised it over his sinful tendencies. We all succeed or fail to some degree in our lives, but no amount of success earns us the right to life. It is a free gift to all who "accept the undeserved kindness of God" (2 Corinthians 6:1). But "each one is tried by being drawn out and enticed by his own desire" (James 1:14).

Like the thief who died alongside Jesus (Luke 23:42–43), we must have living faith and accept the "gift God gives" of "everlasting life" (Romans 6:23; James 2:24) and not after 'tasting the heavenly free gift fall away' (Hebrews 6:4). This gift we will receive "only if we make fast our hold on the confidence we had at the beginning firm to the end" (Hebrews 3:14), which is done by our exercising our free will and 'washing our robes and making them white in the blood of the Lamb' (Revelation 7:14). Further:

**Revelation 3:5 (NWT)**

He that conquers will thus be arrayed in white outer garments; and I will by no means blot out his name from the book of life, but I will make acknowledgment of his name before my Father and before his angels.

Thus, I agree with and will defend Jehovah's Witnesses' view of the salvation of mankind through a living faith and their belief in the existence of human free will, a will that must turn to God who will accept us and have mercy upon us all:

**Isaiah 55:7 (NWT)**

Let the wicked man leave his way, and the harmful man his thoughts; and let him return to Jehovah, who will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will forgive in a large way.

## **‘Strengthening the Things Remaining’**

Christians can no longer afford to let others “taunt the battle lines of the living God” (1 Samuel 17:26). Jehovah’s Witnesses certainly can no longer afford to sit by while others blaspheme God’s holy name and make a mockery of their ministry in making known God’s kingdom. We have people today who actually believe that “Jehovah” cannot be God’s name in English because it is not a Hebrew pronunciation! (These same people make constant use of “Jesus,” as if it were the original [or at least a legitimate] pronunciation of the Messiah’s name!)

Truly, because there is confusion everywhere on so many basic matters we must set aside the emphasis on complex fulfillments of Bible prophecy and return to what is fundamental to God’s glory and to man’s salvation: making known Jehovah’s name and proclaiming Christ as Savior of the world (John 3:16; 12:28)! These teachings involve many historical issues and require that we stand up and answer many tough and cleverly worded questions. But so what ... so what.

That is what being witnesses of Jehovah and of Jesus is all about: defending Jehovah God and answering the tough questions about his Son, the Christ. It is time that we let go of the things that have held us back from bringing these issues before the world, without the entanglements of other teachings.

It is time to crush the “Reformers” view of God and their misleading and even false teachings respecting his nature and his knowledge. It is time to put an end to the confusion about whether “Jehovah” or “Yahweh” is God’s name, when the evidence, linguistic and historical, is rather clear. It is time to give Jesus the “name that is above every name ... to the glory of God the Father” (Philippians 2:9–11). It is time to “strengthen the things remaining” as the Lord of the living and of the dead counseled:

### **Revelation 3:1–3 (NWT)**

These are the things that he says who has the seven spirits of God and the seven stars, ‘I know your deeds, that you have the name that you are alive, but you are dead. Become watchful, and strengthen the things remaining that were ready to die, for I have not found your deeds fully performed before my God. Therefore, continue mindful of how you have received and how you heard, and go on keeping [it], and repent. Certainly unless you wake up, I shall come as a thief, and you will not know at all at what hour I shall come upon you.

Jehovah’s Witnesses need to “wake up”! Jesus was not talking to anyone other than his own first-century followers in Sardis. We may have the “name that we are alive” but in a sense we are, or were, “dead.” But the things that are “ready to die” can be strengthened. We can save the precious name of God and the teachings of his Son from our sins by ‘repenting’ and by restoring honor to the people who bear God’s name.

Jehovah's Witnesses used to be ridiculed for refusing to stand up in public defense of their faith. That is no longer the case. But more is needed, and we must take on the responsibility ourselves to show Jehovah that we will not stand by while his name is subject to ridicule.

As mentioned previously, though Dr. Morey refused my offer earlier this year to debate the truth about God's nature and identity, at the end of The Narrow Mind radio show he challenged me to a debate on the subjects of:

1. The nature and extent of God's knowledge.
2. Does the Bible teach that mankind has "free will"?

Therefore, I will debate Dr. Morey as we have agreed. I will debate whoever raises a challenge for meaningful public debate over anything having to do with God, his nature, his identity, his name, his Son, or his people, Jehovah's Witnesses. That may involve distancing Jehovah and Jesus from some things that should never have been associated with his holy name in the first place. But so what...so what.

I agreed to debate Morey provided that we also, within a reasonable time after this debate, debate the meaning and pronunciation of Jehovah's name and the relationship and identity of God and Christ Jesus. I trust that Morey is a man of honor and that he will keep his word, but whether he does or not really is not the issue: the issue is "strengthening the things remaining." This I will do however it has to be done so that Jehovah and Jesus are glorified and their names are made known throughout the earth apart from any traditions that are not their own.

During my radio discussion with Morey he repeatedly tried to contradict my views by linking them with "Renaissance, rationalistic, Socinian, Unitarian" thinking. I ask that Dr. Morey focus on *my* views, as they are presented together with Scripture and with any other credible historical or linguistic evidence. I do not get my views from those he mentioned, and whether they are similar to mine or not it has nothing to do with whether or not they are biblical. Thus, I will call Morey on such weak attempts to distract others from the primary (biblical) evidence if he ventures into these waters again, unless he would prefer that I join him by pairing his thinking with none other than the murderer and false prophet John Calvin?

Indeed, if Morey would like to discuss belief associations perhaps he can tell me why he thinks he has spiritual fruit in the form of Predestinarianism when one of its founders was one of the most rotten trees ever to grow (Luke 6:43-45):

Calvin's work ... is the strongest refutation of the errors of his opponent which his age produced, but it is not free from bitterness against one who, at last, had humbly asked his pardon, and who had been sent to the judgment of God by a violent death. It is impossible to read without pain the following passage [from

Calvin]: “Whoever shall now contend that it is unjust to put heretics and blasphemers to death will knowingly and willingly incur their very guilt. This is not laid down on human authority; it is God who speaks and prescribes a perpetual rule for his Church.” [Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, vol. 8, page 791.]

As I said, John Calvin was a murderer and a false prophet, a rotten tree who produced rotten fruit. I pray that Jehovah crushes Calvinism. I pray that he gives me a part in crushing it along with any of the variety of fruit it has produced.

But I will not associate Morey with Calvin or any other “Reformer” as long as he sticks to the topic: what does the Bible teach? This has little to do with what others might similarly teach. So let us stick with the Bible, and see what it teaches. After that we can look around at those who similarly teach it.

In addition to what we discussed during the radio show, I have provided some additional information on my positions above. In the November, 2006, IN MEDIO article I will provide additional discussion of my and Jehovah’s Witnesses’ views on God’s knowledge, specifically, his foreknowledge. In December, 2006, I will provide additional information on my and Jehovah’s Witnesses’ positions regarding the biblical teaching of man’s “free will,” further defining my terms as promised. Then, after my December, 2006, article, I will accept any date with at least one week’s notice in the Southern California area for the debate with Morey. In the meantime, I will also supply Dr. Morey and Mr. Downs with a proposal on the debate time and format.

If Dr. Morey has any additional questions after my December, 2006, article, he can email ([gregstafford@verizon.net](mailto:gregstafford@verizon.net)) or call me (Pastor Gene Cook has my phone numbers) and I will gladly speak to him further or post online more about my positions relative to his questions. I do not need any additional time to prepare for the debate. I know enough about Jehovah, about his Son, and about what the Bible teaches to ‘explain and to prove by references’ (Acts 17:3) the position of Jehovah’s Witnesses on these subjects. What I do not know I have faith will be given to me by those I seek to glorify:

**Luke 21:14–19 (NWT)**

Therefore settle it in YOUR hearts not to rehearse beforehand how to make YOUR defense, for I will give YOU a mouth and wisdom, which all YOUR opposers together will not be able to resist or dispute. Moreover, YOU will be delivered up even by parents and brothers and relatives and friends, and they will put some of YOU to death; and YOU will be objects of hatred by all people because of my name. And yet not a hair of YOUR heads will by any means perish. By endurance on YOUR part YOU will acquire YOUR souls.

There is no advantage for anyone in this debate, or in any debate, except for the one who speaks the truth. Truth is the ultimate advantage and can resist all attacks against

it. It does not need a surprise appearance; it does not need a change in debate topics; it just needs to be presented against what is false.

That does not mean that those who witness the presentation of what is true and what is false will be able to let go of "the tradition of men" (Mark 7:8). That is, I admit, sometimes hard to do. But at least we can give all who are interested an opportunity to critically evaluate what is put forth as representing what God wants us to know. Surely, we can ask for nothing more than just such an opportunity. I will do my part to see that those opportunities are provided.

Greg Stafford

(REVISED October 11, 2008)\*

**\*This article was revised only with respect to its formatting. Only minor corrections were made to a small part of the text. Very few changes were made to the content of the original article. One notable change is the replacement of the audio link at the beginning of the article from one on The Narrow Mind (which for some reason is no longer active) to one on Elihu Books where the referenced discussion can be heard.**

(REVISED October 17, 2009)\*\*

**\*\*This article was revised on the above date only for minor stylistic changes and where it involves the removal of the previous link for the audio to the September 27, 2006, The Narrow Mind show with Pastor Gene Cook, Dr. Robert Morey, and Greg Stafford. The audio for this show is now available under the Elihu Books Topical Index, under "A, Audio: Debate: September 27, 2006, The Narrow Mind (Morey/Stafford)"; "D, Debates: Audio: Dr. Robert Morey and Greg Stafford (09.27.06)"; "G, Greg Stafford: Audio: Debate with Dr. Robert Morey (09.27.06)"; G, God: Foreknowledge: Debate: Morey and Stafford (09.27.06)"; and "R, Robert Morey: Radio Debate with Greg Stafford on Sept. 26, 2006."**